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"This study was designed to assess the behavioral characteristics, goals, and attitudes of adolescent high school students attending the school in Western County, Pennsylvania, in the region designated as Appalachia. The two towns were chosen because of the apparent differences in socioeconomic level, social activities, and occupations of inhabitants." Significant differences were found between the two samples of adolescents in many aspects: family living, employment, education, attitudes toward the Federal Government, entertainment, peer group characteristics, attitudes toward sex, and religion. (NH)

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Contrast of Attitudes, Goals, Achievements, and Educational Needs of Adolescents Attending the Same High School in Two Adjacent Appalachian Towns of Differing Economic and Cultural Characteristics

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INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the differences in attitudes and opinions held by samples of students from two differing socio-economic parent groups. Considered are dimensions related to goals, educational aspirations, and attitudes toward achievement. Also considered are certain behavioral characteristics related to family life, employment, peer group activities, entertainment, sex, and religion.

A secondary purpose is to generate hypotheses concerning the tendency of two differing socio-economic areas, settled by the same ethnic groups, and separated by a very few miles, to stimulate goals, aspirations and life patterns among the inhabitants.

The town of Flowers, which represents the lower parent socio-economic group, gives the appearance of relative impoverishment, decay, isolation, and lower status, occupational, and income level. These cultural characteristics are frequently evident in Appalachia. In Flowers a decrease in population of 36% was noted between 1950 and 1960. Valley City, which represents a higher socio-economic parent group, exhibits the characteristics noted above to a far less degree and showed a population increase of 110%. (1)

These towns are located in close proximity to each other, and they send their children to the same schools. In times past, both communities served as coal mining centers. A casual visit gives rise to hypotheses that the populations of children coming from these two areas would present different behavioral patterns in

many facets of their living as well as differences in attitudes, aspirations, and goals.

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(1) U. S. Bureau of Census, U. S. Census of Population: 1960. Number of Inhabitants, Pennsylvania. Final Report PC (1) - 40A. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1961

The Setting

The Valley School District, located in the eastern portion of Western County, Pennsylvania, is centered around Valley City (population 5,987).[2] It contains a number of ethnic groups of Eastern and Southern European origin and a small Negro population. It is located in the Monongahela River Valley. The present population is largely composed of descendants of the European immigrants who came to the area to work in the coal mines during the late 19th and early 20th century. The entire area is located in the Northern Appalachian region about thirty-five miles southeast of Pittsburgh.

The primary industry of the region has been coal mining. A few scattered mills offer employment. The Monongahela River and its tributaries run through the center of the area, affording river barge transportation. A spur line of the Pennsylvania Railroad serves mining needs. The region is related to, but not an integral part of, the industrial complex of Pittsburgh. In the ten years from 1950 to 1960 the majority of the urbanized centers outside the component areas have suffered a population decrease due to the diminution in mining operations. In Western County, an increase of 10.8% in the rural population was noted from 1950 to 1960, while the urban population decreased 4.8%. The Central City of Pittsburgh decreased from 676,806 in 1950 to 604,332 in 1960, or a loss of 72,474 (10.7%). The component urbanized or suburban areas outside the Central City increased from 1,536,430 to 1,801,103, a gain of 264,673 or 17.2%. Some of the urbanized areas surrounding Pittsburgh, but not considered as component areas, show an increase in population due to the development of new industry.

Within the Valley School District there are settlements of differing economic and cultural levels. Among those of a level bordering poverty well below the standard of the general region, are Flowers, Spring Heights (population 1,396 in

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(2) Ibid.

1960)[3], Williamstown,Russell and Mon Hollow. All 81 students attending Valley High School from these settlements participated in the study and are hereafter referred to as the Flowers or lower socio-economic group. An equal number of students stratified by sex and educational class attainment was drawn at random from Valley City students who live in the more affluent portion of the school district. The distance between the two areas is less than three miles.

While Valley City is on a main highway and is the site of Valley City College, the villages of Flowers, Mon Hollow, Russell, Williamstown are isolated from main traffic arteries. The primary egress and ingress to these villages is by private transportation along secondary roads. Only a few service facilities operate within these areas. One steel mill is located near Russell.

Valley City State College was founded in 1852. The College has increased in size from several hundred students as a State Normal School in 1962 to about 5,000 students in 1967. The town serves as a residential area for much of the faculty and administrative staff of the college. Business establishments located in Valley City furnish services to the college community, the general population,and to some of the villages located nearby.

Churches within the city represent the following denominations: Church of Nazarene, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Catholic, Church of God, United Christian and Full Gospel. There are no industries. The central business district contains offices for several physicians, dentists, insurance firms and lawyers.

Among the service and social clubs active in the city are the American Legion, Valley Boat Club, Young Men's Club, the Sorority Club, Fraternal Order of Eagles, the Moose, the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Business and Professional Woman's Club and several ethnic societies such as the Polish Club, Slovak

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(3)
Ibid.

Club and the Italo-American Club.

The population growth of 110% between 1950 and 1960 would seem to make Valley City unique in an area which shows a general decrease in population. Much of this increase, however, is due to the annexation of part of East Pike Run. While the increase was taking place at Valley City, the unincorporated town of Flowers, less than five miles distant, showed a decrease of 36% in population.

Exact statistics on Flowers are not available. The town was founded in 1903 by a coal mining company. It was populated by relatively uneducated immigrants from Italy and Eastern Europe to work in the mines. Many of the houses are "company houses", some of which are barracks-like in appearance. The coal companies liquidated these houses by selling them to private persons in 1929. There are two Roman Catholic churches in the village; one serves the Hungarian population, the other serves the Slovakian population. There is also one Hungarian Presbyterian and one Negro Baptist Church. There is a Hungarian Hall which serves as a community social center, a general store, a garage and a service station. A badly polluted tributary stream of the Monongahela River flows through the town. There are no industries. Several service facilities include a garage, general store and post office. The vast majority of working people are employed away from home. The quality of the homes is in great contrast to those in Valley City.

Social and economic characteristics of Flowers are not available. Valley City characteristics as of 1960[4] are shown in Table I.

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(4) U. S. Bureau of Census. U. S. Census of Population, 1960. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Pennsylvania. Final Report PC (1)-40C U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington,D. C., 1962.

Table I

Social and Economic Characteristics of Valley City

Foreign born	8.7%
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	24.1%
Foreign Stock	32.8%
Median school years completed (25 & older)	9.8%
Completed 4 years of high school or more	41.3%
Non-worker ratio	1.94%
Females in labor force (14 & older)	23.1%
Civilian labor force, unemployed	9.7%
Persons employed in manufacturing industry	22.3%
Median family income	$5,025
Family income under $3000	21.0%
Family income $10,000 and over	9.4%

The Samples

All students residing in the Flowers-Spring Heights area were interviewed. A matching number of boys and girls from each of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades were picked randomly from the students residing in Valley Borough. These samples are described in Tables II and III.

Table II

Description of Students

	Girls				Boys			
Grade	N	Valley Average Age	N	Flowers Average Age	Valley Average Age	N	Flowers Average Age	N
10th	10	15.4	10	15.2	15.5	14	15.6	14
11th	13	16.1	13	16.4	16.2	13	16.1	13
12th	11	17.3	11	17.2	17.3	20	17.4	20
	34		34			47		47

Table III

Mean IQ as Measured by Otis Gamma Form M

	Valley City		Flowers			
	Mean	SD	Mean	t	SD	P
All Students	108.4	11.83	103.7	2.44	13.9	<.05
Boys	107.7	11.94	101.2	2.37	14.5	<.05
Girls	109.3	11.22	107.4	.66	11.65	NS

Procedure

A semi-structured interview form was administered to the eighty-one students residing in Flowers (34 girls, 47 boys) and eighty-one students residing in the Valley City (34 girls, 47 boys). It was administered at the Valley City Community High School by trained student interviewers from Valley City State College. The interview schedule was pretested by the author and a group of 10 undergraduate students. The guidance counselor at Valley City Community High School arranged for interview schedules and randomly selected the appropriate numbers of male and female students at the different age levels from all Valley City students at the school.

Three raters categorized responses to the questionnaire in conference to insure rater agreement. When there was occasional disagreement, the responses were discussed until agreement was reached by all three raters.

The interview was designed to elicit information covering the following topics.

1. Family life: number of children, relations between parents, employment.
2. Employment: types of employment available, attitude toward employment, future of the area as conceived by students.

3. Education: aspirations, satisfactions, plans, types desired.
4. Government: interest in and knowledge of specific functions and expectations.
5. Entertainment: hobbies, reading, T.V., sports, clubs.
6. Peer groups: goals of groups, types of memberships, values.
7. Sex: attitudes toward sex life, sexual behavior.
8. Religion: attitudes toward religion, conflicts, resolutions.

The chi square technique was used to test for significant differences in the responses.

Findings

Family Life

Responses to several items relating to the Family showed significant differences between the two samples. These included the family structure, the size of the family, the IQ of the students as measured by the Otis Gamma, Form FM, the types of employment of parents, attitudes toward family employment, and the proportions of mothers employed outside of the home.

The father was generally considered to be the head of the household by both samples, but the reasons for according him this status differed. Generally, Valley City students accorded the status position to the father due to the fact that he made the final decision whereas in the Flowers sample it was primarily because of his financial support. The median family income was lower in Flowers than in Valley City. Both samples felt, for the most part, that their living conditions were comfortable. Opinions concerning living conditions of neighbors tended to be ranked lower by the Flowers sample. More students from Flowers reported that their families owned their homes and had paid for their cars. A greater proportion of the students from Flowers reported that their families did not have cars. Students from Valley City reflected more satisfac-

tion with living conditions such as housing and employment than was true of Flowers.

Table IV

Family Life

	Category	P	Note
1.	Occupation of Mothers	<.01	Flowers mothers tend to be housewives more than in Valley City.
2.	Fathers considered head of house	NS	71.5% of each named father.
3.	Reasons for 2	<.001	Flowers tend to accord positions to income, Valley City tend to use decision making as a criterion.
4.	Estimate of family income	<.01	Valley City estimated higher

Employment

The availability of employment was considered to be much greater in Valley City. This finding was confirmed by the fact that 75% of the Flowers sample reported that their neighbors worked away from the town while 83-1/3% of Valley City sample reported that their neighbors worked in the town. Valley City offered greater varieties of employment. The attitude of the students toward the future of their community was significantly more optimistic in Valley City. Reasons given for choosing a job differed in that money and prestige were more frequently mentioned in Flowers, while interest coupled with other factors was more frequently mentioned in Valley City. Students in Valley City expressed a greater preference for higher status positions than those in Flowers. One-half the boys in Flowers mentioned the Armed Forces as a possible occupation choice, but no boy in Valley City mentioned this.

The majority of neighbors were categorized as skilled workers in the Valley City sample and as unskilled in the Flowers sample.

Neither sample was optimistic about prospective employment conditions. The general apathy in both samples was exemplified by statements to the effect that they would be unable to improve conditions. Only 13% in Valley City and 12% in Flowers felt that they could do something to improve conditions. 22.4% of the total expressed a clearcut desire to remain in the area.

Table V

Employment

Category	P	Note
1. Family income	< .01	Valley City estimated higher
2. Neighbor's income	<.001	Valley City estimates higher
3. Neighbor's satisfaction with living conditions	< .05	Valley City more satisfied
4. Estimate of town's future	<.001	Valley City more optimistic
5. Own opinion of town's future	<.001	Valley City more optimistic
6. Family owns home and car	< .01	Flowers more ownership
7. Employment mainly away from home	<.001	Flowers tended to work away
8. Status of worker	<.001	Valley City higher
9. Feeling about employment conditions around home	NS	70% Flowers and 57% Valley City considered conditions unfavorable
10. Prediction of town's growth	<.001	Valley City expects growth

Education

The findings are in agreement with Hyman's[5] statement that the lower class will have lower educational aspirations. Goals for educational attainment were

(5) Hyman, Herbert, "Value systems of different classes: A social psychological contribution to the theory of stratification" in Class Status and Power, R. Bender and S. Lipset, eds., Glencoe Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1957, 426-442.

significantly higher in Valley City than in Flowers with 65% of Valley City students desiring a college education as compared with 49% of the Flowers sample. Terminal education at the high school level is about twice as great in Flowers. There was almost equal interest in further technical training.

There was little difference between the two samples in evaluating the adequacy of course offerings at Valley City High School. Approximately 70% expressed approval of the courses offered. There was a significant difference concerning changes the samples would make in the high school curriculum. 31% of the Flowers sample made recommendations for change, while 49% of the Valley City sample made suggestions for additions. 38% of the Valley City group wanted more college preparatory courses added while 17.5% of the Flowers sample concurred with the recommendation. The samples were in general agreement that few courses should be deleted.

The rate of school dropouts is about three times as great among Flowers students as Valley City students.

The same variables which motivated students to make job preferences seemed to play an important part in educational goals. Money and prestige were ranked above interest in work by 52.5% of the Flowers group and 42% in the Valley City group. Money is an important motivating factor for the students from the less affluent area.

Table VI

Educational Aspirations

Category	P	Note
1. Levels of education desired	<.001	Valley City higher
2. Plans to relocate for work	NS	23% of the total expressed a desire to remain
3. Plans for future vocation	<.001	Valley City level higher

4. Additions to curriculum	<.001	Valley City desired more College preparatory and vocational courses
5. Educational goals	<.001	Goals set higher in Valley City
6. Reasons for choice of occupational goals	<.001	Money more frequently mentioned in Flowers

Government

The question of national, state and local government seemed to be of little concern. Flowers students evidenced less concern than those from Valley City. The only significant difference was in Valley City's more favorable opinion of the national government. Flowers evidenced little concern about any form of government.

Table VII

Attitude toward Government

Category	P	Note
1. Government, Federal	<.05	Valley City more favorable, majority content
2. Government, State	NS	Valley City more favorable, majority content
3. Government, Local	NS	Valley City more favorable, majority content

Entertainment

No significant difference was found between the two samples except when the girls were considered as subpopulations. The girls in Valley City preferred more passive activities. Sports were preferred by 50% of the boys but a higher percentage (59.6%) of the boys in Flowers preferred sports compared to 40.5% of the boys in Valley City. The two populations showed no significant difference in choice of TV programs. Mystery, westerns, and adventure were the

most popular. The same choices were expressed for types of reading. About 21% of each sample read a newspaper.

An analagous result was obtained concerning the types of clubs to which the student belonged. However, 32.8% of the Flowers sample belonged to no club as compared with 20% of the Valley City sample. This finding would tend to affirm the findings of Hufnagel, McElroy, Simich and Regine,[6] who found a significant difference between grade point average ($z = 2.45$ $p < .02$) of senior boys who participated in extra curricular activities compared with those who do not participate.

98% of the students reported that they liked sports, but the two samples were significantly different in the types of sports preferred. Students from Flowers tended to prefer major sports, while students from Valley City tended to prefer general sports.

Table VIII

Entertainment

Category	P	Note
1. Entertainment, total sample	NS	
Entertainment, boys	NS	
Entertainment, girls	< .05	Flowers less sports minded and less passive, more occupied with feminine chores.
2. T. V. programs	NS	
3. Types of reading	NS	
4. Types of club membership	NS	
5. Types of sports	< .05	Flowers tending to major sports
6. Attending activities of a cultural nature at Valley City College	< .001	Valley City sample more active

(6) Hufnagel, William T.; McElroy, Eric; Simich, George; and Regine, David, "The relationship between grade point average and extracurricular activities", Unpublished study, California State College, California, Pennsylvania, 1967.

Peer Group

Of the total sample, 60% said they preferred a small group of companions, rather than large groups. Reasons given for picking the type of groups showed a significant difference. 72% of the Flowers group stated that there was less confusion in small groups, while 42% of the Valley City sample said there was more fun in small groups. The Valley City sample preferred sports as an activity while the Flowers sample stated a preference for passive activities. Reasons given for joining a peer group were "security", "fun", "gaining support for their opinions from others," and "common interests". Peer groups in Flowers tended to be more heterosexual than in Valley City.

Table IX

Peer Groups

Category	P	Note
1. Large vs. small peer groups	NS	Both preferred small groups
2. Peer group activity	< .05	Valley City more athletic, sports inclined
3. Heterosexual groups	< .05	Flowers more prone to mixed groups

Sex

The large majority of both samples stated the belief that sexual mores in the United States are changing. The two samples differed in their attitudes toward movies, plays and novels involving "love". A larger proportion of the Flowers sample said they did not enjoy this type of story, while only 6.2% of the Valley City people agreed with them. While dating started earlier in Flowers than in Valley City, there was a tendency in Flowers to believe that dating should start at a later date. 76.2% of the students from Flowers stated that they felt that dating should start between the ages of 16 to 20. The

Valley City population stated that they felt dating should begin between the ages of 10-13 and increase rapidly until the age of 20. The Flowers attitude toward petting was significantly more uninhibited. Different attitudes toward sexual release were expressed by the two samples.

Table X

Attitude toward Sex

Category	P	Note
1. Opinions concerning sexual mores	NS	General agreement that there is change toward more free sexual expression
2. Age of starting to date	< .05	Flowers tending to date earlier
3. Age thought appropriate to start to date	<.001	Flowers tended to feel dating should start later
4. Attitudes toward petting	< .01	Valley City stated it depends, but both tended to oppose
5. Attitude toward how far petting should go	< .05	Flowers more free in attitude

Religion

The two groups differed in affiliations with religious organizations. Flowers was predominantly Catholic; Valley City was predominantly Protestant. The two samples stated that their church affiliation was helpful to them. They differed, however, in the benefits obtained from the church.

Table XI

Attitude toward Religion

Category	P	Note
1. Ways in which religion is of help	< .01	Serves different functions; more social in Flowers, more clearly defined in Flowers
2. Religious affiliation	< .01	Flowers predominantly Catholic, Valley City predominantly Protestant

DISCUSSION

Many factors contribute to the differences expressed by the two samples of high school students from Flowers and Valley City. Flowers is isolated from all other communities except Mon Hollow and a few other sparcely settled and badly deteriorated villages. The level of aspiration is higher in Valley City than in Flowers. The 5,000 Valley City College students and the faculty, drawn from all parts of the United States and several foreign countries, add some wealth and cultural influence to the community. This influence probably enhances the aspirations and goals of the Valley City sample. The presence of the college faculty may raise the cultural awareness of the community and the possibility of personal achievement. For example, many blue collar workers attend night courses at the college.

The planned expansion of the college probably raises expectations for the future in Valley City. Flowers shows no signs of optimism. The presence of more civic clubs, more varied civic and social organizations, churches and shopping facilities, all of which are related to the college, add to the more optimistic outlook of the adolescent population of Valley City. The lack of employment and isolation undoubtedly contributes to the apathy in Flowers.

There appear to be differences between the Valley City and the Flowers students in both attitude and behavior. A tightly structured constellation of attitudes generally pervades the whole area touching the institutions of the family, school and business. This appears to be a carry-over of ethnic customs which are paternalistically oriented and are held more strongly in the more isolated areas. Lozovsky,[7] in a study of ethnic groups in Flowers,

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(7) Lozosky, Mary Elaine, "Assimilation of Polish, Slovakian and Hungarian Ethnic Groups of Flowers," Pennsylvania Unpublished master's thesis, California State College, California, Pennsylvania, 1967.

tends to support this analysis in her finding that although the third generation of Czechoslovakian, Polish, and Hungarian people have been assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon culture, cultural patterns and heritage are transmitted and acculturation is not complete.

In many cases, anxiety was expressed by the youth at the thought of leaving well known surroundings although other areas present greater opportunities for advancement. A similar attitude by parents may be one of the important reasons why some successful people maintain residence in Flowers although they travel considerable distance to occupy fairly important positions.

The general apathy, the lower goals and aspirations expressed by the sample from Flowers is prevalent in smaller towns and rural areas in the Appalachian Region. The attitudes of the high school population from Valley City are probably less positive than a comparable population in a more affluen part of the United States.

One motivation expressed by seeking education beyond high school or by finishing high school is that education enables one to make more money in an easier manner. The main goals appear to be obtaining a job, earning money, and living in better cultural conditions. In a school system which embraces two distinct populations, it might be well to investigate the possibility of broadening the curriculum so that students from any community could find the curriculum best suited to their abilities.

SUMMARY

This study was designed to assess the behavioral characteristics, goals, and attitudes of adolescent high school students attending the school in Western County, Pennsylvania, in the region designated as Appalachia. The two towns were chosen because of the apparent differences in socio-economic level,

social activities, and occupations of inhabitants. Significant differences were found between the two samples of adolescents in many aspects of the following areas of their living.

I. Family living

II Employment, aspirations, opinion of income of neighbors, and certain environmental conditions.

III Education, plans and types of education desired.

IV Attitudes toward Federal Government

V Some aspects of entertainment enjoyed by adolescents.

VI Characteristics, and activities of peer groups.

VII Attitudes toward sex, with Flowers reporting a somewhat more free attitude.

VIII Religious affiliation and meaning of religion.

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